

## The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University

### Ohio Mining Journal

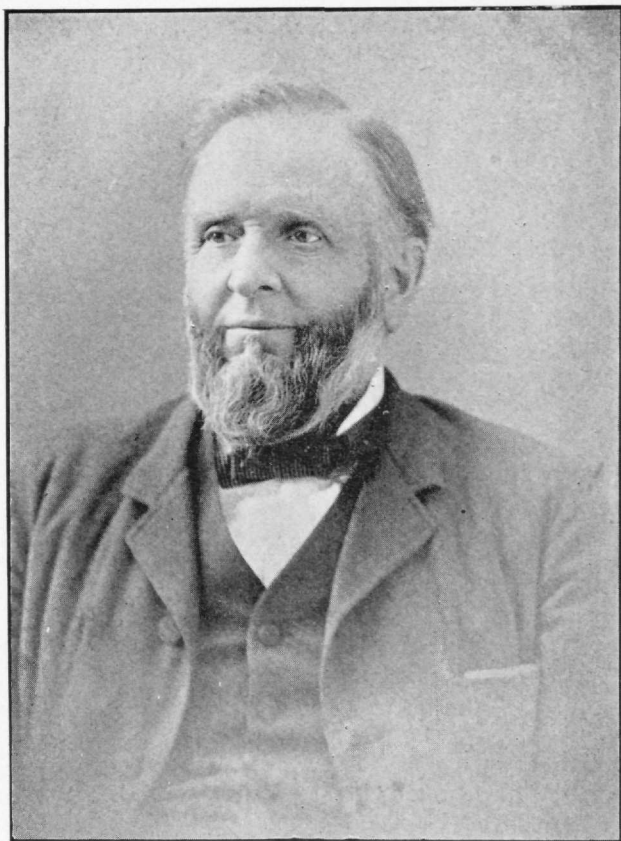
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JACOB G. CHAMBERLAIN.

NECROLOGICAL.

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Jacob G. Chamberlain was elected a member of the Institute at its first regular meeting on the 11th day of January, 1881. For many years the registers show his presence at the meetings and the early Journals contain many valuable papers prepared and read by him before the members. His advanced ideas upon the settlement of disputes by arbitration are well remembered by the older members of the Institute. This was no doubt largely due to his early life, having been born of New England parentage, in the town of London, Merrimac county, New Hampshire, on September 11th, 1829. The valley of the Merrimac with its picturesque hills was his home until the death of his father, which occurred during his ninth year. The next six years of his life were spent at the home of his grandfather. During this period his occupation, with the exception of a short time in his uncle's saw mill, consisted of farm work. His school life, which began at an early age, consisted of two terms of two months each. In those days the birch switch formed an important factor in the education of the youth. His last lesson in this branch was administered by Levi P. Morton, afterwards Vice-President of the United States. Farm and saw mill life were distasteful to him and he went into a machine shop at Franklin, N. H., remaining but a few months, when he went to Manchester with the hope of securing work in a cotton factory. Failing in this he went to Boston for the same purpose, but met with no better success. While there he secured employment in a hotel, working for his board alone, and while there all his money except ten cents was stolen. During a strike among the employes he assisted the landlord and his wife in conducting the business. This was his first experience in labor troubles. At the age of seventeen years he became dissatisfied with hotel work and decided to try new fields. Being without money, except what little he obtained by selling some

of his personal effects, he induced the stage driver to take him to Lawrence, Mass., where he entered a machine shop, doing all kinds of common labor. Seeing no opportunity of learning the trade of a machinist he resigned and entered into partnership with two young men who were engaged in lathing buildings by contract. These young men were of studious habits, so his evenings were spent in study. Through a banter, the three enlisted in the regular army at the time of the Mexican war, and went to Governor's Island and served a part of a year, when he was taken sick and relieved from the army, returned home. He then entered a chair factory at a salary of fifty dollars per year, with the privilege of attending school two months each winter. At the age of nineteen he entered Gilmanton Academy in New Hampshire, where he remained for over a year. While here he gained some notoriety by organizing a military company among the students. In this his army experience aided him materially and gave him the captaincy. At a general muster his company had the post of honor. The General and Colonel commanding and the newspapers complimented him highly, and the college officials extended their thanks for the good work done in disciplining the students. After leaving Gilmanton he entered his brother's store at Fisherville, N. H., assisting him and attending the Fisherville Academy. A little incident while living with his grandfather decided his life work. A corps of engineers engaged in surveying a line for the New Hampshire and Northern railway ran the line through his grandfather's house, where the party took dinner, leaving the transit standing in the orchard. Securing something to stand upon, he succeeded in looking through the instrument. After dinner he followed the party for two miles carrying stakes. He then made up his mind to become an engineer and this idea never forsook him. In October of 1850, with sixty dollars, he left Boston for Ohio. He traveled by rail to Hollidaysburg, Pa., then by stage to Pittsburg, by steamboat to Wheeling, then by stage over the National Road to Aetna in Licking county, Ohio. His funds were now reduced to \$1.50, which compelled him to teach school for one term. He then went to Cleveland where under Charles Collins, Division Engineer of the Cleveland,

Painesville and Ashtabula R. R., now a part of the L. S. & M. S., he entered the corps as axman. Mr. J. H. Devereux, who afterwards became one of the leading railroad men of the nation, shortly after promoted him to rodman and assigned him to Frank Ford, afterwards chief engineer of the C. C. & I. R. R., and sent him to Unionville, Ohio. While on this corps he studied hard, Mr. Ford assisting him. Upon the completion of the road to Ashtabula he went with Mr. Ford to the Cleveland, Norwalk and Toledo R. R. In July, 1851, he was promoted to assistant engineer and placed in charge of the track laying from Grafton to Norwalk. This he finished in December, 1852, and on the 31st of that month he was married to Harriet Bugbee of Stockton, New York. His next position was on the Franklin and Warren R. R., afterwards the A. & G. W. and now the N. Y. P. & O. Of this road he located the line from Kent to Warren, Ohio, his headquarters being at Windham in Portage county. He remained with this road until March, 1853, when he went west, visiting Chicago, Dubuque and other places, returning to Cleveland where, at the instance of Alvin Brooks, a former acquaintance, he went to Marquette, Mich., where he built a tramroad from Marquette to the Jackson & Cleveland Iron Mining Co's. mines. He had the honor while here of loading the first two cars of iron ore shipped from the Lake Superior iron mines. While in Marquette he was elected County Surveyor. In 1855 he returned to Ohio and in the early part of 1856 as Division Engineer he surveyed a line from Niles to New Lisbon, Ohio. Mr. Hale, the chief, soon after resigned and Mr. Chamberlain was appointed to his position, holding the place for three or four years. When engaged in surveying this line he discovered outcrops of coal at Washingtonville. This proved upon trial to be a good blacksmithing and coking coal. In company with Wm. Wetmore, of Canfield, he leased 200 acres, opened up a mine and built coke ovens. Mr. Wetmore soon sold his interest to Judge G. I. Young, and the firm became Young and Chamberlain. They hauled the coke by wagon to Columbiana and shipped to Massillon and other points. In 1859 E. W. Fisk, of Ashtabula, bought an interest and the firm became Young, Fiske &

Co. They built a strap tram railroad, capable of carrying the freight cars from the mines to the P. Ft. Wayne & C. R. R. to a point where Leetonia now stands. Iron manufacturers began to interest themselves. Marvin Kent, President, and Wm. Lee, Superintendent of the A. & G. W. R. R. associated themselves with the company. Jonathan Warner, Dr. Lemuel Wick, Judge Milton Sutcliffe and Joseph H. Brown also bought an interest. The railroad from New Lisbon had been completed to this point. In 1862 or 1863, in connection with Chauncey H. and W. C. Andrews, he interested himself in extending this railroad to Niles, where it intersected the A. & G. W. More coal lands were secured and the land purchased where in honor of William Lee, the town of Leetonia was laid out, Mr. Chamberlain building the first dwelling house in it. During this time in addition to the work at the mines he, in connection with Mr. C. H. and W. C. Andrews, surveyed railroad lines from Youngstown to Hubbard, Brookfield and Sharon, thus assisting in opening up the great block of coal fields of the Mahoning Valley. In 1866 he organized the Leetonia Iron and Coal Co., built two blast furnaces, and in 1870 a rolling mill in connection. In 1871, in company with William Mathers, he contracted to build the Louisville, New Albany and Chicago R. R. About this time the firm, in connection with Mr. J. H. Page, contracted to build the Indiana North & South railway. In 1876 he built the furnace at Moxahela, in Perry county, Ohio, and while engaged in this work was appointed chief engineer of the Ohio Central railway, and supervised the building of the Moxahela tunnel. When the road was nearly completed, he returned to Leetonia and as superintendent took charge of the Cherry Valley Iron Works, formerly the Leetonia Iron and Coal Co. This position he held until 1887, when he resigned to take charge of the Alabama, Tennessee Coal and Iron Railway Company's property, to which position he was recommended by General Samuel Thomas and Calvin S. Brice. He developed the coal on the 70,000 acres of land which they owned, and built three hundred coke ovens at Jasper, Alabama. The company purchased the Sheffield and Birmingham railroad, extending it to Jasper, a distance of 87 miles. Of this work he was chief

engineer. In the latter part of 1888 he assumed detailed charge of the furnaces at Sheffield. In 1889 he was appointed receiver of the entire property, including the railroad. The latter he sold in the course of a few months and operated the other property for two and one-half years, when it was sold to the largest stockholders, who organized the Alabama Iron Railway Company. He continued as general manager with the new company and made extensive repairs and additions to the furnaces. When this work had been completed he accepted the position of general manager of the Virginia Iron and Railway Co., at Goshen Bridge, Va., where he remained for two years, during which time he secured for the company valuable coal and ore lands in West Virginia. In the latter part of 1892 he went to Los Angeles, California, to build a beet sugar factory, being associated with Mr. A. S. Robbins, an old friend whom he had known in Windham, Ohio. Owing to the government removing the bounty on sugar, the enterprise was abandoned. He then built the Pioneer Sheet Iron Rolling Mill on the Pacific coast, with which he was connected at the time of his death, which occurred on Sunday morning, May 30th, 1897, at Los Angeles, Cal. His home life is said to have been almost perfect; regardless of his trials and perplexities he was never known to be severe or to utter an unpleasant word. He was remarkably considerate and charitable under all conditions and his death is a severe loss to the Institute. It may be truthfully said that the world is better for his having lived.